



# USDA-NASS North Dakota Field Office

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## NEWS RELEASE

**Farm Numbers**  
January 31, 2006

### Farm Numbers

#### North Dakota

The number of farms and ranches in North Dakota during 2005 is estimated at 30,300 and remained the same as 2004 and 2003, according to the USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service, North Dakota Field Office. This is the lowest level since estimates began in 1910. North Dakota farm numbers peaked in 1933 at 86,000. All land in farms totaled 39.4 million acres for the seventh consecutive year, 3.30 million acres below the high of 42.7 million acres recorded in the period of 1950-1954. Average farm size was also unchanged from the previous year at 1,300 acres per farm.

Small farms in the economic sales class of \$1,000-\$9,999 during 2005 declined by 200 operations from the previous year to 8,500 while farms with sales of \$10,000-\$99,999 increased 100 operations to 11,900. Farms with sales of \$100,000-\$249,000 declined by 100 to 5,300. In the \$250,000-\$499,999 sales class, the number of farms increased by 100 to 2,800 and farms in the \$500,000 plus category increased by 100 to 1,800.

A farm or ranch is defined as any establishment from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were sold or would normally be sold during the year. Government payments are included as sales. The annual estimate includes farms with their entire acreage enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program or other government programs.

#### United States

The number of farms in the United States in 2005 is estimated at 2.1 million, 0.6 percent fewer than in 2004. Total land in farms, at 933.4 million acres, decreased 2.9 million acres, or 0.3 percent, from 2004. The average farm size was 444 acres during 2005, an increase of one acre from the previous year. The decline in the number of farms and land in farms reflects a continuing consolidation in farming operations and diversion of agricultural land to nonagricultural uses.

Farm numbers declined in the three smallest sales classes and rose in the two largest sales classes. Part of the decline in the smaller sales classes was due to normal attrition, such as retirements. In addition, some operations transferred to larger sales classes by enterprise expansion. However, the majority of the changes in the sales classes were likely due to rising incomes. Many farms and ranches near the top of their sales class in 2004 moved into the next higher sales class in 2005 without adding land or otherwise expanding their operations.

The largest percentage changes from 2004 occurred in the smallest and largest sales classes. Farm numbers declined 1.1 percent, to 1.17 million farms, in the \$1,000 - \$9,999 sales class. Meanwhile, farm numbers increased 3.8 percent, to 79,410 farms, in the \$500,000 or more sales class. The number of farms with less than \$250,000 in sales fell 0.8 percent from 2004 and the number of farms with \$250,000 or more in sales rose 2.4 percent.

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**Number of Farms and Land in Farms by Economic Sales Class and Average Farm Size  
North Dakota and United States, 2004-2005 <sup>1/</sup>**

Item and Class	North Dakota		United States	
	2004	2005	2004	2005
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>
<b>Number of Farms</b>				
\$1,000-\$9,999	8,700	8,500	1,181,190	1,168,220
\$10,000-\$99,999	11,800	11,900	599,280	596,440
\$100,000-\$249,999	5,400	5,300	167,030	166,880
\$250,000-\$499,999	2,700	2,800	88,980	90,040
\$500,000+	1,700	1,800	76,490	79,410
Total	30,300	30,300	2,112,970	2,100,990
	<i>1,000 Acres</i>	<i>1,000 Acres</i>	<i>1,000 Acres</i>	<i>1,000 Acres</i>
<b>Land In Farms</b>				
\$1,000-\$9,999	2,900	2,800	120,890	118,350
\$10,000-\$99,999	10,700	10,600	266,600	260,705
\$100,000-\$249,999	11,300	11,000	193,665	192,195
\$250,000-\$499,999	8,000	8,100	151,375	152,295
\$500,000+	6,500	6,900	203,765	209,855
Total	39,400	39,400	936,295	933,400
	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Acres</i>
<b>Average Farm Size</b>	1,300	1,300	443	444

<sup>1/</sup> A farm is any establishment from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were sold or would normally be sold during the year.

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~ Compiled and Published by ~

USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service

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